

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 NIC-01 SAJ-01 IO-14 DRC-01 /133 W

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R 111700Z JUL 74

FM USMISSION BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3638

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION NATO

CINCEUR FOR POLAD AND OPS

CINCUSAREUR FOR POLAD, OPS AND AEAGG-COC

CINCUSAFE FOR POLAD AND OPS

USELMLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 1157

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GE

SUBJECT: HARASSMENT OF US AUTOBAHN TRAVELLER

1. AT APPROXIMATELY 1800 LOCAL JULY 10 US SERVICEMAN TRAVELLING WITH FAMILY TO BERLIN ON HELMSTEDT-BERLIN AUTOBAHN WAS STOPPED BY EAST GERMAN VOPO NEAR KM. STONE 43 FOR ALLEGEDLY DRIVING IN WRONG LANE. VOPO INSTRUCTED SERVICEMAN TO MOVE VEHICLE INTO NEARBY PARKING LOT. SERVICE-MAN REFUSED TO COMPLY WITH THIS DEMAND, AND CORRECTLY REQUESTED PRESENCE OF SOVIET OFFICER. VOPO REPLIED THAT NO SOVIET OFFICER WOULD BE SUMMONED, AND REPEATED INSTRUCTIONS TO MOVE OVER INTO PARKING LOT. REJECTING OUT OF HAND SERVICEMAN'S SECOND REQUEST FOR SOVIET OFFICER, VOPO TURNED AROUND AND ORDERED COLLEAGUE TO ASSIST HIM IN MOVING US VEHICLE OFF ROAD. SECOND VOPO APPROACHED VEHICLE, PLACED HIS HAND ON HIS PISTOL, AND THREATENED TO SHOOT
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VEHICLE OFF ROAD. US SERVICEMAN AGAIN TWICE REQUESTED TO

SEE SOVIET OFFICER, TO WHICH FIRST VOPO RESPONDED THAT NONE WOULD BE SUMMONED AND THAT SERICEMAN WAS IN GDR AND HAD TO OBEY INSTRUCTIONS. TWO VOPOS THEN BEGAN TO ROCK US VEHICLE, AND ONE OF THEM THREATENED TO SHOOT TIRES OUT. HAVING ONCE MORE IN VAIN REQUESTED PRESENCE OF SOVIET OFFICER, SERVICEMAN DROVE HIS CAR SLIGHTLY OFF ROAD SO THAT BACKED-UP TRAFFIC COULD PASS. ONE OF VOPOS THEN WARNED HIM THAT BORDER GUARDS WOULD BE INFORMED AND THAT HE, SERVICEMAN, WOULD NEVER BE ALLOWED TO TRAVEL ON AUTOBAHN AGAIN VOPO THEREUPON RECORDED LICENSE NUMBER OF US VEHICLE. THROUGHOUT DETENTION, WHICH LASTED BETWEEN 5 AND 10 MINUTES, VOPOS USED VERY PROFANE LANGUAGE.

2. MISSION PROTOCOL OFFICER PROTESTED INCIDENT TO SOVIET PROTOCOL OFFICER ROMANOVSKIY AFTERNOON JULY 11, STRESSING THAT THIS CONSTITUTED TOTALLY IMPERMISSIBLE AND UNWARRANTED HARRASSMENT OF US PERSONNEL. WHILE SUCH CONDUCT ON BEHALF OF POLICEMEN, IN PARTICULAR THREATENING OF INNOCENT PERSONS WITH ARMED FORCE, WOULD BE REPREHENSIBLE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, IT WAS ALL THE MORE UNACCEPTABLE IN THAT EAST GERMAN OFFICIALS HAD NO RIGHT TO EXERCISE AUTHORITY OVER ALLIED PERSONNEL TRAVELLING ON AUTOBAHN UNDER SOVIET AEGIS. MISSION PROTOCOL OFFICER VOICED EXPECTATION OF HIS AUTHORITIES THAT SOVIET AUTHORITIES, WHOM HE EMPHASIZED WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFETY AND UNHINDERED PASSAGE OF ALLIED PERSONNEL ON HELMSTEDT-BERLIN AUTOBAHN, WOULD TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO ENSURE THAT EAST GERMAN POLICEMEN INVOLVED WERE PROPERLY DISCIPLINED AND THAT SIMILAR INCIDENTS DID NOT RECUR.

3. ROMANOVSKIY ANSWERED THAT BERLIN-HELMSTEDT AUTOBAHN LAY WITHIN GDR TERRITORY AND THAT ALLIED SERVICEMEN SHOULD AS CONSEQUENCE OBEY GDR TRAFFICE REGULATIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS OF GDR POLICE. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOVIETS DID IN FACT HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROCESSING ALLIED TRAVELLERS AT BORDERS(I.E. DREWITZ AND MARIENBORN), BUT INSISTED THAT ON AUTOBAHN ITSELF SUCH TRAVELLERS CAME UNDER CONTROL OF GDR AUTHORITIES. MISSION PROTOCOL OFFICER REJECTED THIS CONTENTION, AND INSISTED ON SOVIET RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE SAFE AND UNHINDERED PASSAGE FOR ALLIED TRAVELLERS ALONG ENTIRE LENGTH OF AUTOBAHN.
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ROMANOVSKIY SAID THAT SOVIETS COULD NOT BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE OFFICERS AT ANY POINT OF AUTOBAHN WHEN ALLIED TRAVELLERS RAN AFOUL OF GDR LAW.

4. AFTER FURTHER DISCUSSION, ROMANOVSKIY ADMITTED THAT CONDUCT OF VOPOS DURING INCIDENT HAD BEEN "BAD" HE SAID THAT HE COULD NOT, HOWEVER, REPORT MATTER TO GDR

POLICE AUTHORITIES AND THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT US STATEMENT
FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

5. INCIDENT ALSO BEING PROTESTED TO SOVIETS AT CHECK-
POINT LEVEL.

6. USCOB CONCURS.KLEIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, HARASSMENT, PERSONNEL TRAVEL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: martinml
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BERLIN01157
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740185-0978
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740759/aaaabyin.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: martinml
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 APR 2002 by shawdg>; APPROVED <26 FEB 2003 by martinml>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HARASSMENT OF US AUTOBAHN TRAVELLER
TAGS: PGOV, PFOR, WB, GC, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005